

STATE OF CONNECTICUT
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES



HOUSE DEMOCRATS OFFICE
LEGISLATIVE OFFICE BUILDING, ROOM 4100
HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT 06106-1591

March 12, 2015

Good afternoon Co-Chairs Representative Dargan and Senator Larson; Ranking members Representative Zupkus and Senator Guglielmo and distinguished members of the Public Safety and Security Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in favor of House Bill 6970 An Act Concerning Emergency Service Personnel.

This proposal requires that the public safety answering point (PSAP) serve a population of 40,000 or more either as a member of a regional emergency telecommunications center, multi-town or single town PSAP in order to continue to receive funding and replacement equipment. It also requires towns to integrate their police, fire and EMS into the PSAP as well. Too often, we have a town with a single PSAP for a police department and its fire and EMS are in another. This is not only inefficient it also compromises our public safety.

In 2012, The Office of Emergency Telecommunications released the Kimball Report, which was conducted to determine the most appropriate, cost effective and efficient way to implement the consolidation of PSAPs and the handling of 911 calls in the state. Many of their recommendations have been put in motion, but there is more to be done. The findings in the Kimball Report were complemented by similar reports of the MORE Commission and the Federal Reserve Bank, which indicated that this is an area where savings could be achieved at the State and local levels while dramatically improving public safety.

Compared to the rest of the country, we have one of the most disjointed PSAP systems in place. The Kimball Report actually recommends the ideal of three regional PSAPs and one Statewide PSAP operated by the State Police. While we will not be achieving this optimal situation, this bill is moving us closer toward that goal.

In essence, we will no longer have PSAPs that serve a population of less than 40,000 people. I want to point out that a community will not be without 911 emergency services. Towns will be placed in a PSAP that meets the criteria established in this bill or they can make their own choice of which PSAP they will join. This bill will in no way jeopardize the Statewide Emergency Telecommunications system. Instead, it will produce significant cost savings, greater efficiencies and most importantly, enhanced public safety.

This change will take effect in 2020. The reason the date was pushed out is because the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection (DESPP) has just purchased

equipment to distribute to the PSAPs and the towns and State will need time to plan for the consolidation. The next time DESPP will procure new equipment is in 2020 so we will want towns to decide or choose which regional or multi-town PSAP they will join prior to the next purchase order.

Disallowing the continuation of single service/multi-service PSAPs will provide for an integrated, regionalized police, fire and emergency telecommunication service that will reduce call times, improve operational capabilities through efficiencies and will save taxpayers money at both the state and local levels, again while enhancing the public safety of Connecticut residents.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this important proposal.